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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
LANSING



STEVEN E. CHESTER  
DIRECTOR

December 15, 2005

Ms. Shari Kolak  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 5, Superfund Division  
77 West Jackson Boulevard (SR-6J)  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Ms. Kolak:

SUBJECT: Allied Paper, Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River; Georgia Pacific Mill Property  
Operable Unit 6; Draft Remedial Action Work Plan

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) comments in regard to the Draft Remedial Action Work Plan (work plan) dated October 31, 2005, submitted by Blasland, Bouck & Lee, Inc. (BBL) on behalf of Georgia-Pacific Corporation (GP). These comments summarize those discussed with you and others on December 1, 2005. While the MDEQ learned during that call that there was no expectation that this work will result in a partial deletion from the National Priorities List and a delisting from Michigan's List of Contaminated Sites, the following comments have been structured to guide what should be included in a revised work plan. This was felt necessary given the work plan itself was unclear what the goal was, either removal or remediation, or some hybrid of both for different areas. Comments numbered 8 and 9 were based on input MDEQ staff received from outside parties, including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and relate to Natural Resource Damage-related activity.

Comment No. 1: In accordance with the Draft Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent (Draft Agreement), the work being considered is a Time-Critical Removal Action for the Refuse Area of the Kalamazoo Mill Property and Oxbow Area at the Former Hawthorne Mill Property. The work plan should be titled as such. The MDEQ suggests that the Oxbow Area does "not" include the active channel of the Kalamazoo River. It is not clear whether GP's working definition of the Oxbow Area includes this or not.

The work plan also describes removal actions at the Transformer Pad Area and Wastewater Pipeline Area of the Kalamazoo Mill Property; however, the goal of those removal actions is not clear. The goal of a removal or remedial action at any of the areas of either property should be clearly specified in a revised work plan. It should be noted that if the goal is to complete "remedial" actions at any of those areas, rather than completing a Time Critical Removal Action, then full compliance with the requirements of Part 201, Environmental Remediation (Part 201), of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, is necessary.

Also, the work plan does not yet meet the requirements of the Draft Agreement or a Removal Action consistent with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), which requires sampling for all hazardous substances. The work plan implies that it was structured to comply with the NCP; it does not. Similarly, it also appears the work plan was

prepared without the benefit of the Draft Agreement and, thus, is not yet consistent with that Draft Agreement. As discussed during our call, it was not Ms. Eileen Furey's intent that the Draft Agreement be interpreted as broadly as what the language was suggesting. As we recall, Ms. Furey was going to take a second look at the Draft Agreement.

Comment No. 2, Section 1.1: The first sentence of the work plan states the removal action is for "...the removal of paper-making residuals and soils that contain, or may potentially contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)..." If this work is to be a "remedial" action at any of the individual locations, the action must address all hazardous substances to be compliant with the Draft Agreement and the NCP. The second paragraph of Section 1.1 of the work plan references a document that both the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the MDEQ have determined to be deficient. This statement should be deleted and it is recommended that the work plan state simply the goal of this action, rather than referencing previously submitted, deficient documents. The goal of each excavation should be clearly stated in a revised work plan.

The work plan does not call for proper waste characterization of the refuse area material or proper characterization of the possible "buffer zone" that would remain between the refuse area and the river. Analyzing only a portion of samples for target compound list/target analyte list (TCL/TAL), for example, is deficient. Previous sampling did not include analysis for all hazardous waste, which is necessary to determine the characterization of the waste material and to see if it can be placed into the A-Site portion of Operable Unit 2. It should be noted that the waste characterization sample analytical results obtained from residual samples collected from the test pits within the Oxbow Area of the Hawthorne Mill property indicate there are contaminants other than PCBs present above criteria. Therefore, the excavation confirmation sampling (or post-excavation sampling) in the Oxbow Area should include PCBs and the other contaminants detected above applicable criteria. The work plan should be modified accordingly to address these issues.

Comment No. 3, Section 1.2: Documents referenced in Section 1.2, such as the Quality Assurance Project Plan, Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan, and Turbidity Monitoring Plan, among others, need to be reviewed to ensure they are still applicable, and updated if necessary. Many documents used to help guide previous activities at the Allied Paper, Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site are around 14 years old, while others were intended to apply only for a specific action. Some "tweaking" of one or more of these documents is likely necessary.

Comment No. 4: Some tables and text of the Summary Report for the Hawthorne Mill Investigation need to be corrected and clarified, and a comprehensive diagram showing the Test Pits from which samples have been collected would be helpful. Currently, the text describing the test pit investigation, specifically the number of test pits, where they were conducted, what samples were collected from certain test pits and for what analyses, is ambiguous or incorrect. Also, the summary analytical tables do not reflect all detections or exceedances of criteria, as implied in the footnotes. Because this document is referenced in the work plan, these discrepancies should be resolved.

Comment No. 5, Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.4: The work plan states that the Refuse and Oxbow Areas will be excavated using visual criteria and any additional removal will be conducted to achieve Michigan's Part 201 Industrial PCB cleanup criterion of 16 parts per million (ppm). The MDEQ believes the appropriate removal criterion in these areas for PCBs is 0.33 ppm; the Draft Agreement recognizes this is a Time Critical Removal Action because of periodic inundation of

a portion of the Refuse Area and the Oxbow Area. Because of this inundation and because these areas are (or will be after excavation work) regulated as waters of the state and susceptible to erosion into sediment and surface water of the Kalamazoo River, the human health criterion of 0.33 ppm is warranted. This criterion is only slightly lower than the aquatic ecological criterion of 0.5 ppm derived from the Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment. The work plan should be revised to list the appropriate criteria for PCBs and other applicable hazardous substances if a remedial action is the goal.

Comment No. 6, Appendix D: It appears that the minimum number of post excavation samples to be collected from the Refuse Area should be 13, not 11. The minimum number of post excavation samples to be collected from the Oxbow Area (assuming accuracy of the proposed excavation areas) should be 48 rather than 47. It should also be noted that the work plan's proposed sample grids for post excavation sampling may not be appropriate if the size of the excavation is expanded or smaller than what has been assumed. And, if additional excavation of soils is performed, then re-sampling of the re-excavated area should be performed consistent with the appropriate sampling strategy. To reiterate a previous comment, if the intent is to use data for more than a Time Critical Removal Action, the data collected must meet Part 201 and all applicable risk-based criteria. This applies to not only the Refuse Area and the Oxbow Area, but also the Transformer Pad and Wastewater Pipeline Areas. Because the work plan references Part 201 sampling strategies, certain sampling aspects would need to be addressed, such as biased sampling.

Comment No. 7, Section 3.6.1: The Restoration section of the work plan should refer to "mitigation" rather than "Restoration." The 100-year flood elevation in the Refuse Area is 763.6 NGVD29, and the work plan indicates that the buffer zone elevation will be 755 feet, or approximately 8.6 feet below the 100-year flood elevation. The applicable criterion for this area which will be subject to frequent inundation is 0.33 ppm for PCBs. The maximum slope of the backfilled area should be specified (i.e., no greater than 1:6 slope). The vegetation to be used in the floodplain should be specified as well. The rip-rap proposed in the work plan appears to be more than what is necessary, and based on previous discussions, a minor amount of rip-rap at the toe of the slope only, at or below the water line for two to three feet should be adequate until vegetation is established sufficiently to hold the riverbank.

Comment No. 8, Section 3.6.2: It is not clear what is meant by "The only restoration will take place along the bank of the Oxbow Channel..." That should be clarified or deleted. The mitigation proposed for the Oxbow Area should be specified in greater detail, including indicating the species and density of vegetation used. The work plan may eliminate the backfill or should specify a maximum elevation. If no backfill is needed, the remaining (parent) material should be tested (as specified for the backfill) for suitability to support the vegetation. Survival of vegetation should be monitored for two years with replacement as necessary.

The work plan should provide more detail regarding how the Oxbow Area will be mitigated if the excavation extends to the channel. It should be noted that the current estimated extent of excavation appears to exclude waste material from the location of previously collected sample BS-15, where PCBs were reported at a concentration of 150 ppm. The estimated extent of excavation in the Oxbow Area should take this data into consideration, and be revised accordingly in the work plan.

Comment No. 9, Section 3.7.1: This section contains a general overview, not an ambient air monitoring plan. There is little information regarding continuous dust monitoring. The most crucial information, the number of sampling points, is not addressed. Four to five dust



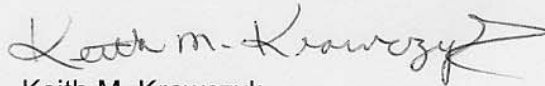
monitoring sampling locations are necessary. This can be done with stationary sites or by someone who walks the perimeter of the active areas and samples at multiple locations every hour or two during each work day.

Comment No. 10, Section 3.7.2: Two sampling sites for PCBs are insufficient. Even if activities are kept to a small area at any one time, three samples should be the absolute minimum: one upwind, one downwind, and one in between the activity and the nearest receptors. Wind direction on a given day is not consistent enough to catch any pollutant plume that may exist with only two sampling locations. Also, reduction or elimination of the PCB monitoring after only five days is very quick; typically, two weeks or more are needed to make such a decision, especially if only a limited number of sites are used.

Comment No. 11, Section 4.2: It is unclear when GP will be actually submitting the Post-Removal Site Control Plan (Control Plan) based on how this paragraph is currently structured. The MDEQ is not certain whether the documents they reference actually need to preface this Control Plan. All to say, the work plan is unclear in this regard and appears to require modification.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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Superfund Section  
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cc: Ms. Eileen Furey, USEPA  
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